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SUBJECT: COSTA RICA - RESPONSE TO ARMS TREATY DEMARCHE

REF: STATE 63299

¶1. (U) On May 31, Pol/C and Poloff discussed USG position (Reftel) on the proposed UN Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) with MFA Deputy Director for Exterior Policy Alejandro Solis. We left a non-paper; noted that the USG was presenting a demarche on the issue to a number of host governments, including ATT co-sponsors; and asked that the GOCR consider the USG position. Solis said he would get back to us. On June 6, the MFA responded via Diplomatic Note (DGPE-DT-052-07) covering a non-paper (see informal translation below).

¶2. (SBU) COMMENT: We were struck by how quickly the MFA responded (a new record for here in San Jose), and the favorable tone of the response, which stresses the general areas of agreement between the proposed ATT and current USG practice and policy. However, given the importance the Arias administration places on the ATT initiative, we anticipate that the GOCR will be more inclined to seek USG support for the ATT than to accept USG proposals (should there be any) to modify the text. END COMMENT.

¶3. (U) BEGIN INFORMAL TRANSLATION OF GOCR NON-PAPER

COMMENTS REGARDING A NON-PAPER ON THE PROPOSAL FOR AN ARMS TRADE TREATY (ATT)

Costa Rica, together with other Nations, has proposed the negotiation of a legally-binding Arms Trade Treaty. This is a further step in the process initiated by a proposal from Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Oscar Arias-Sanchez -proposal adopted by the Group of Nobel Laureates- for an international code of conduct on international arms transfers. As meetings developed and new States joined the proposal, it was concluded that, though the Treaty is a slower negotiation mechanism, the Treaty will exert pressure, as no other voluntary compliance mechanism would, on those countries trading arms to governments and to irregular groups violating human rights.

Within this context, we highly value the commitment of the United States on the strict monitoring of exports, as well as the cooperation offered to third countries to establish their own monitoring mechanisms and legislation. Clearly, Costa Rica encourages all countries to establish national laws to prevent or reduce irresponsible arms trade.

Nonetheless, there is no contradiction between national efforts and negotiations for an international treaty, but both could complement each other. Costa Rica is aware that among the 24 countries that abstained [from voting], some are main export countries, and their incorporation into negotiations would probably be a slow and

complicated process. We faced the same experience with other treaties designed to limit arms production and export, such as those to ban anti-personal landmines.

Similarly, there is agreement regarding [arms] control, as it was mentioned in the document, in such areas as:

- Exporter and arms dealer registration;
- [Arms export] control list, for those requiring an export license; and,
- Monitoring [measures] and compulsory national legislation.

Costa Rica urges all countries to participate in the United Nations Group of Experts on an Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) in 2008. The mandate on this subject is clear, and according to its terms, Costa Rica will make all efforts to ensure that the results are simultaneously inclusive and effective, for the purpose of eradicating or reducing uncontrolled arms trade. Arms trade entails paying an unacceptable high price for life, health and production in a lot of countries, some considered among the less developed countries of the world.

END NON-PAPER

WEITZENKORN